

22 Cardinal Point
Salem, SC 29676

January 3, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft, US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft,

It has come to my attention that the Department of Justice (DOJ) has finally settled its antitrust lawsuit against Microsoft with a strong and binding agreement that will permanently change the software industry. I applaud the decision to end this lengthy lawsuit, because our economy needs a break, and Microsoft is a big part of the economy.

This settlement is a common-sense compromise, and court-appointed mediators worked with the DOJ and Microsoft around the clock to make this settlement work. It grants all sorts of privileges to Microsoft competition concerning business dealings and trade-secret protection. In my opinion, it would be a waste of America's tax dollars to pursue this case in court beyond this agreement.

The settlement grants computer makers broad new privileges to configure Windows so as to promote non-Microsoft software programs that compete with programs included within Windows. Computer makers will now be free to remove the means by which consumers access various features of Windows. They can also replace access to those features with access to non-Microsoft software.

On top of that, Microsoft has also agreed to design future versions of Windows XP to make it easy for computer makers, consumers and software developers to do these non-Microsoft promotions within Windows. The new Windows version will make it easy to add or remove access to features built in to Windows or non-Microsoft software. Consumers will have the freedom to choose to change their configuration at any time.

What else could Microsoft's competitors want? Enough is enough. My hope is that the DOJ will not get involved in any more lawsuits against Microsoft after this agreement. I hope the DOJ will work on the obviously more pertinent issues it faces in this world.

Sincerely,



Frank Van Overstraeten

cc: Senator Strom Thurmond
Representative Lindsey Graham